

FRED ANSON'S MEMORIAL SERVICE

My connection with Fred Anson goes back to the happy days of Rotherfield School just after the war had ended. Rotherfield always remained one of Fred's great loves, and no wonder: it was there that he had met Moira. But let me tell you a little bit about Rotherfield. It was situated between the villages of Greys and Peppard in South Oxfordshire; a one-form entry secondary modern school of four classes. The 1944 Education Act had created the secondary modern school, the school of the future. Where, free from exam worries, we were encouraged to adapt the curriculum to the needs of the pupils. And we did! Fred himself introduced Surveying and Rural Science; Music, Drama and Choral Speaking flourished, all of these subjects were almost unknown in those days.

Fred set us all a terrifically high standard; his expectations of both staff and pupils were immense. Mind you, it wasn't always possible to live up to Fred's expectations, especially when it came to Gardening which took the place of Rural Studies in the summer months. There I badly fell from grace. I knew all about the breeds and care of cows, but horticulture was a great mystery. Fred had sent me out with a group of boys to sow parsnip seeds. Preparing the ground was no problem, but being thrifty-minded I was very sparing in the sowing of these seeds and scattered them one at a time. You can imagine Fred's amazement and subsequent amusement when he discovered what I had perpetrated. We had many good laughs about it in later years.

Meanwhile, Rotherfield's reputation as a progressive school had spread across educational circles nationally. We had a constant stream of visitors, and the BBC made a programme about the school. And Fred got his own reward. Although he had been invited to join His Majesty's Inspectorate, he preferred to remain a Head Teacher. When the Oxfordshire Education Authority opened its first purpose-built, post-war secondary school at Wheatley, Fred was invited to become its first Headmaster. And, despite my horticultural failings, he showed his faith in me by encouraging me to apply for the Headship of the English and Drama Department.

Under Fred Anson's strong leadership, Wheatley School became an educational establishment of which we were all proud. Four of the teachers who were on the staff right from the beginning are here today. Apart from Moira, my wife and myself, Ray Allen (Head of Geography and later Deputy Head), contributed to making Fred's ideals become a reality.

I shall remain eternally grateful to Fred for introducing me to Eileen, who became my wife, and for launching me on a long career in education.

I salute an outstanding headteacher, of flair and dedication, who always remained a great human being.

Gerard Gould
7th January 1993